NEWS ANALYSIS 1-0427 MARCH 24, 1976
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THE WEST BANK DEBATE CONTINUES

ANNCR: VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY DISCUSSES THE CONTINUING SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE WEST BANK PROBLEM:

VOICE: THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE WEST BANK ISSUE HAS HAD ONE OBVIOUSLY UNIQUE FEATURE---THE SEATING OF ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION AT ONE DIPLOMATIC TABLE. ON TUESDAY---THE SECOND DAY OF THE DEBATE---IT CAME UP WITH ANOTHER: A SPEECH BY THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR WHICH CONTAINED AN UNUSAUAL AMERICAN CRITICISM OF ISRAEL.

THE SPEAKER WAS THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, WILLIAM SCRANTON, WHOSE CALM STYLE ALONE WAS ENOUGH TO PUT HIM IN CONTRAST WITH HIS PREDECESSOR, DANIEL MOYNIHAN. IT WAS THE SPEECH ITSELF, HOWEVER -- MR. SCRANTON'S FIRST SUBSTANTIVE EFFORT IN HIS NEW POST--WHICH ATTRACTED ATTENTION, RATHER THAN THE STYLE. HE REITERATED THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO ISRAELI SECURITY, AND PRAISED ISRAEL'S CAREFUL ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOLY PLACES. BUT HE SAID THAT THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORY WERE ILLEGAL AND AN IMPEDIMENT TO PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, THE OCCUPATION ITSELF HAS ALWAYS BEEN SEEN BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY AS AN ABNORMAL STATE OF AFFAIRS WHICH SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO AN END. AND MR. SCRANTON ALSO DECLARED THAT NO ISRAELI CONSTRUCTION OR OTHER ALTERATIONS OF JERUSALEM COULD---AS HE PUT IT---"PREJUDGE THE FINAL AND PERMANENT STATUS" OF THE CITY.

BUT, UNUSUAL THOUGH IT MAY BE, THIS CRITICISM OF ISRAELI ACTIONS IN THE OCCUPED TERRITORIES DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY NEW DEPARTURE IN UNITED STATES POLICY. WASHINGTON HAS FOR A LONG TIME HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT SUCH MATTERS.

FURTHERMORE, THE UNITED STATES HAS ALWAYS SUPPORTED THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION TWO HUNDRED FORTY-TWO OF NOVEMBER, NINETEEN SIXTY-SEVEN, WHICH CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI ARMED FORCES FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

NOR DID MR. SCRANTON'S SPEECH INDICATE WHAT POSITION THE UNITED STATES WOULD TAKE ON ANY RESOLUTION COMING OUT OF THIS WEEK'S DEBATE. HE DID MAKE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT WASHINGTON HAS THREE TESTS WHICH IT WOULD USE TO JUDGE ANY RESOLUTION. FIRST, WOULD IT CORRESPOND TO THE ACTUAL SITUATION---IN OTHER WORDS, NOT BE TOO FANCIFUL AND FAR-RANGING? SECOND, WOULD IT "ADVANCE THE PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF THE AREAS INVOLVED?" AND, THIRD, WOULD IT AFFECT THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS---GENERALLY TAKEN TO BE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS TWO-FORTY-TWO AND THREE-THIRTY-EIGHT? IN OTHER WORDS, THE UNITED STATES IS NOT RULING OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE WEST BANK DEBATE COULD PRODUCE A RESOLUTION WHICH, BY REALISM, RESTRAINT AND MODERATION, MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATING CLIMATE.

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